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Research Article

Assessing Organizational Behavior: A Case Study in a Colombian Retail Store

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Abstract

In this research, significant components of organizational behavior in an actual commercial retail store located in Colombia, were further considered and investigated. The business case was analyzed by applying a structured questionnaire in the company. It was concluded that the success of the company is influenced by factors such as motivation, job satisfaction, emotions and decision making, indicating that perception factors and attitudes need reinforcement. In addition, recommendations for the intervention of organizational behavior, as well as the perspective of reducing the negative impacts that these findings might have on the obtained results are also proposed.

Keywords: Organizational Behavior, Human Behavior, Psychological Factors.

Introduction

Organizational behavior (OB) theory researches the effect of the human behavior within an organizational environment, focusing on improving the organizational effectiveness by reducing behaviors such as absenteeism and staff turnover (Robbins

and Judge, 2013; Organ, 2018), which negatively affects the organizational performance. OB theory is a multi-faceted discipline with a major contribution from behavioral sciences and evidence-based practices. OB uses the measurement and analysis of human behaviors to maximize employees' productivity and maximize the

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performance of human resources development and the management of organizational systems (Luthans, 2011; Chams-Anturi, Moreno-Luzon and Escorcia-Caballero, 2019; Pangil and Nasurdin, 2019).

The application of OB theory using systematic methodologies results in a more accurate prediction than those based on intuition, which is necessary to generate management solutions adjusted to each organizational need, instead of general solutions (Griffin and Moorhead, 2011; Robbins and Judge, 2013). Therefore, OB has become a critical aspect for the organizational success if properly applied within the organization (Bateman and Crant, 1999).

The study of OB provides managers with challenges that can be considered as opportunities for business growth. It can improve employees' productivity, as it teaches managers how to treat their staff and understand how to implement change programs. Also, it helps employees balance between work and their lives (Robbins and Judge, 2013; Wagner and Hollenbeck, 2014; Mullins and Mclean, 2019). In addition, OB offers managers a useful guide to create a healthy work environment by stimulating the innovation of their employees.

The purpose of this research is to study a current organizational behavior case of an actual retail store located in Colombia, highlighting the theoretical foundations of the organizational behavioral research, measuring and analyzing the behavior of the individuals while facing changes in the environment, and defining practical implications for the entrepreneurs.

Theoretical Framework

Organizational behavior (OB) is defined as the field of study that investigates the behavior of individuals within an organization, aiming to learn about their perceptions, values and cognitive capacity in working environments (Davis and Newstrom, 2002; Chiavenato, 2009; Robbins and Judge, 2013; Mcshane, 2018; Mullins and Mclean, 2019). Chiavenato

(2009) states that OB distinguishes an organization from another, even in the same economic sector. Also, he states that each person is subject to different influences, both external and internal, that affect his behavior individually and consequently his interaction with other people in the organization. Psychological constructs such as attitudes, motivations, job satisfaction, perceptions, emotions and decision making are popular ways to describe and analyze what goes into OB (Heath and Sitkin, 2001; Miner, 2003). A brief description of each construct is presented as follows.

Attitudes are statements of favorable or unfavorable evaluations of objects, people or events. They reflect how a person feels about something. Attitudes are mainly composed of three components: cognition, affection and behavior (Breckler, 1984). The cognitive component of an attitude describes the belief of how a person sees things, for example, "my boss is unfair". The affective component is based on the emotional part of an attitude, for example, "I dislike my boss". Moreover, the behavior component of an attitude refers to a person's intention to behave in a certain way towards someone or something, for example, "I will look for another job, because my boss does not listen to me". These components are closely related, which denote a negative attitude towards the boss.

An individual has many attitudes, but regarding organizational behavior, the number of attitudes at work is limited, these are positive or negative evaluations that employees have about various aspects of their work environment (Moreno-Luzon, Chams-Anturi and Escorcia-Caballero, 2018). Organizational behavior researchers have focused on three attitudes: work involvement, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Brooke, Russell and Price, 1988). Other attitudes considered by researchers are organizational support and dedication of employees.

Job satisfaction is defined as the positive feeling resulting from a personal work accomplishment (Robbins and Judge, 2013).

Enjoying work highly correlates with high levels of satisfaction. Jobs that generate and provide their employees with training and independence satisfy most workers (Barling, Kelloway and Iverson, 2003). Employees prefer stimulating jobs that pose challenges versus predictable and routine ones. Evidence also indicates that employees who are satisfied with their jobs increase customer satisfaction and loyalty (Schneider and Bowen, 1985). Satisfied workers are more friendly, optimistic and responsible, and also less likely to change their jobs, these are advantages appreciated by the client who will ultimately receive a better service (Bitner, Booms and Mohr, 1994).

Motivation affects the intensity, direction and persistence of the effort exerted by a person to achieve a goal. Intensity refers to the energy applied by a person in reacting to events, which requires direction to get favorable results. Persistence is the time through which the individual maintains the effort. People who are motivated focus on their tasks until their goal is achieved (Robbins and Judge, 2013; Pinder, 2014).

In the 50s, several concepts on motivation were developed and four specific theories were formulated. (1) Theory of the hierarchy of needs, by Abraham Maslow, who raised the idea that each person has a hierarchy of five needs: physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-realization (Maslow, 1954). (2) Theories X and Y, by Douglas McGregor, who proposed two visions of human beings: A negative or X vision where the employee dislikes his work and must be directed, and another positive or Y vision where the employee likes his job and is self-responsible for it (McGregor, 1960). (3) McClelland's theory of needs, by David McClelland, focuses on three needs: achievement (based on the urge to excel and fighting for triumph), power (based on the need to make others behave according to a specific way) and affiliation (the desire to have friendly and close relationships) (McClelland, 1961). (4) The theory of the two factors or the theory of motivation and hygiene, by Frederik Herzberg, who states that the individual-work relationship and

the attitude adopted to meet any work challenge, are fundamental to determine the success or failure of the job (Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman, 1959). Although these theories are widely known, there are several arguments regarding their validity. Recently, OB researchers have developed new contemporary theories of motivation, such as (5) The theory of cognitive evaluation, which introduces extrinsic awards for doing work that previously had intrinsic rewards (De Charms, 1968). (6) The theory of goal setting, which states the importance of establishing goals to increase performance (Tubbs, 1986). (7) The theory of personal effectiveness, or social cognitive theory or social learning theory, which refers to a person's belief in carrying out a task (Bandura, 1997). (8) The theory of reinforcement, which states the importance of reinforcement to get a desired behavior (Komaki, Coombs and Schepman, 1996). (9) The theory of equity, which encourages people to compare their work results (Ronen, 1986). (10) The theory of expectations states that a good evaluation of the employee's performance will lead to a better performance, requiring organizational awards, such as salary bonuses (Robbins and Judge, 2013).

Perception is the process in which people interpret the impressions they have about a situation to get a meaning of what happens in the environment. There are some factors that can distort the perception of people such as the recipient (e.g., motives and expectations), the object (e.g., news) and the situation (e.g., time) in which the perception unfolds. There are also some valuable simplifications that allow subjects to get a quick and accurate perception (Robbins and Judge, 2013): (1) Selective perception: Which is useful when we highlight some stimuli to assimilate everything we see. This characteristic highlights a person, object or event to what is perceived. (2) Halo effect: Which is when an impression of a person is outlined based on a characteristic such as appearance. (3) Contrast effect: When evaluating and comparing characteristics of people. In addition, (4) Stereotyping: Where someone is judged based on the perception of the group to which he/she belongs.

Emotions are defined as those direct feelings toward someone (Fridja, 1993) and they are usually transitory. Some examples of emotions are anger, fear, sadness, happiness and surprise, accompanied by facial expressions and caused by specific events (Ashkanasy, Hartel and Daus, 2004). The founder of modern philosophy, René Descartes, identified six primitive passions - astonishment, love, hate, desire, joy and sadness - arguing that they compose all other emotions (Descartes, 1989). Charles Darwin took a broader approach, which suggested that emotions developed to help solve problems. Emotions motivated people to take actions to survive.

Decision-making occurs when an individual chooses between two or more alternatives. There are different ways to decide. (1) The rational model occurs when choices are made by maximizing value within constraints (Simon, 1986). These choices follow a method by first defining a problem, identifying the decision criteria, weighting the criteria, developing and testing alternatives, and finally selecting the best alternative. Several assumptions support this model, including that all information is available in order to choose a good alternative (March, 1994). (2) Bounded rationality, where the individual responds to the problem by reducing it to a level easier to understand (Kahneman, 2003); and (3) intuition, which is an unconscious process formed from experience. The latter is considered to be the least rational of the options, but it is the most usually chosen. (Gilovich, Griffin and Kahnemann, 2002).

Before starting with the decision-making procedure, it is important to know how to

reduce biases and errors. Focusing on the goals facilitates the elimination of options that contradict interests, nullifies excess of confidence, does not give meanings to random eventualities and increases decision alternatives by developing a wide range of different elections.

Research Methodology

The organizational behavior is analyzed using a case study in the import business unit at one of the largest retail chains in Colombia. *Molyntix* is a company with approximately 70 years in the retail market, with 100% national capital and an approximate market share of 22 percent. *Molyntix* has more than 400 stores across the national territory and it is recognized as the leading company in the commercialization of optimal quality consumer products. The company markets a wide portfolio of private and store-brand products in several categories: grocery, textiles, toys, sports, home appliances, technology and others.

To obtain the information, a structured questionnaire of 44 questions was carried out following the method proposed by Robbins and Judge (2013). All items were measured using a Likert scale with values ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). The questionnaire was applied to the *Molyntix* interest group, which included commercial directors of each category, customs agency, international cargo agent and operators. The total population is equal to 65 participants. In order to calculate a proper sample size, the following calculation was used:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 * N * p * q}{e^2 * (N - 1) + Z^2 * p * q}$$

Where:

n: sample size

Z: degree of confidence

N: population

p: probability of success

q: probability of failure

e: estimation error

Replacing values;

$$n = \frac{0.95^2 * 65 * 0.5 * 0.5}{0.03^2 * (65 - 1) + 0.95^2 * 0.5 * 0.5}$$

$n = 52$ participants

Then, the study was carried out on 80% of the total population (i.e., $n = 52$). The observation of the individuals and their specific behavior within the organization prevailed. Therefore, the content analysis and participants' observation are considered as a key part of the process.

The research was based on the six basic principles of qualitative validity (Robbins and Judge, 2013), considering the following:

- Credibility or internal validity: Where different methods were combined such as the observation of the process, questionnaires and analysis of written documents. In addition, the research was carried out by a personnel that is not part of the area under investigation, which reduces biases and guarantees the credibility of the study.
- Transferability or external validity: Although the results of the present investigation are not extrapolated to other organizations, the methodological experience can be applied to other commercial establishments.
- Reliability: Where the studies developed with respect to the object of analysis were taken into account.
- Confirmation: This investigation was configured by the triangulation of methods, analysis of document content, observation and surveys. The data collected are analyzed by the researchers; which guarantees the objectivity of the research.
- Integrity: Where the identification of informants is reserved, maintaining relationships of trust with them.

- Consistency: Where the research seeks to respond to a need evidenced by researchers in one of the most important commercial chains in the country, in order to provide a solution to the problem described.

Results

Individual factors were measured to study the organizational behavior of *Molyntix* using a survey questionnaire for the 52 participants. The results are as follows:

Demographic Information

From the 52 responses obtained, the following information was obtained:

1. 44% belong to the senior management, 37% to the middle managers and 19% to the professional and operational staff.
2. 44% of the respondents are female and 56% are male. The average age is approximately 38 years old.
3. 88% of the respondents have a professional training in the postgraduate modality, which shows a high level of skills in specific areas within the process.
4. On average, the personnel surveyed are more than 3 years old in *Molyntix*. All of them know the strategy of the organization at each corresponding level.

Analysis of Results

Below are the results obtained for each of the factors - attitudes, motivations, job satisfaction, perceptions, emotions and decision making of *Molyntix*, accompanied by a behavioral analysis or a diagnostic

description and a series of recommendations for each one.

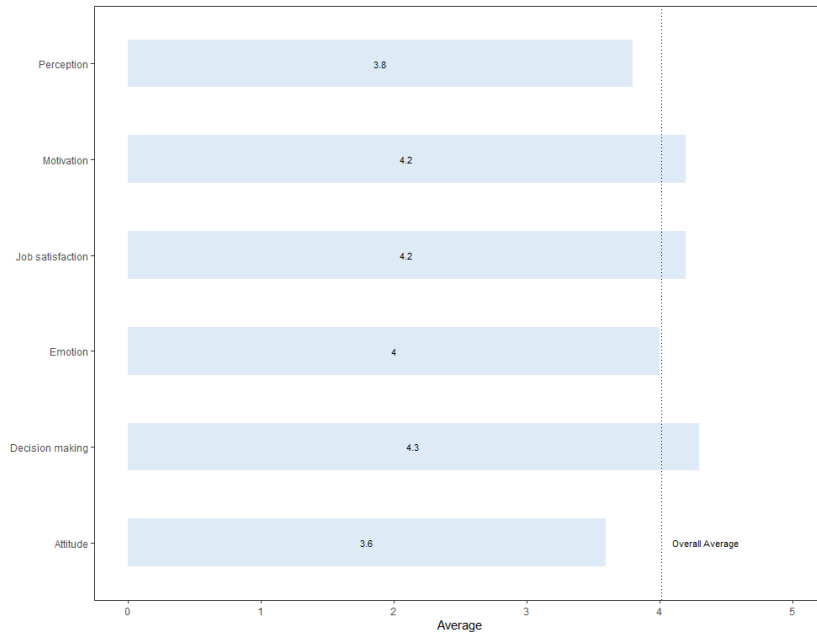


Figure 1: Survey results

Attitudes

The results show that the individuals in the business process of the company are not completely satisfied with their assigned

work and their involvement in the organizational decisions. Results show low levels of organizational commitment and a perception of low organizational support and recognition.

Table 1: Attitude

AVERAGE	FINDINGS	PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT
3,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It is considered that immediate bosses and co-workers are friendly, organized and flexible. ✓ No significant features of irony or injustice are denoted. ✓ Attempts to adapt to new team situations are evident. ✓ The staff is considered important for <i>Molyntix</i>, and they are committed to the quality of their work. ✓ Sometimes employees feel that their boss is unfair. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create safe spaces for interaction with employees to forge effective communication. ✓ Promote the participation of employees in the changes that affect their work. ✓ Define communication actions that illustrate clarity in the process, both in the tasks and in the planned objectives to generate a more effective work empowerment.

Motivation

The individuals involved in the business process in *Molyntix* show a good level of

motivation which involves intensity, direction and persistence of the individual's effort towards achieving a goal.

Table 2: Motivation

AVERAGE	FINDINGS	PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT
4,2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Employees consider that their leaders are aware of their skills. ✓ They also consider that their cognitive capacity has increased as an effect of the training processes received at <i>Molyntix</i>. ✓ Staff can ask questions and suggest modifications to the traditional ways of doing things without any fear. ✓ There is a feeling of commitment, but sometimes the staff does not feel aligned with the direction of <i>Molyntix</i>. ✓ Recognitions and incentives are received for their actions, exalting their growth in <i>Molyntix</i>. ✓ Workers do not feel heard at all, but this gap is compensated with the training process, a respectful work environment and remuneration according to their profiles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Creating spaces to improve the organizational communication in which workers can express their feelings and meet their social needs.

Job Satisfaction

This factor involves several elements such as activities, compliance with internal labor regulations, relationship with managers and colleagues, and performance criteria. This sample does not illustrate absenteeism or employee turnover.

The results show a good level of job satisfaction among the employees of *Molyntix*. The employees are satisfied and speak positively about the organization, help each other, exceed the expectations of their job and strive beyond their duty

Table 3: Job satisfaction

AVERAGE	FINDINGS	PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT
4,2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Employees are interested in the well-being of their colleagues. ✓ The leader of the process effectively directs his subordinates and gives them confidence in their work. ✓ Workers share that wages are proportional to what other companies offer. ✓ Staff can count on their bosses, feel their support and consider that they are properly directed. ✓ They feel satisfied with their current work and have confidence to discuss doubts and concerns, and ask for cooperation from their peers. ✓ They believe that work is a good opportunity to grow and improve. ✓ The tools provided to perform their job require improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create interactive spaces between work teams to encourage a more effective communication. ✓ Design a formal mechanism for the evaluation of job satisfaction, considering alert indicators that allow constant monitoring of this variable.

Perception

The perception factor shows that the personnel involved in the business process

in *Molyntix* does not correctly perceive and interpret the different situations presented at work.

Table 4: Perception

AVERAGE	FINDINGS	PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT
3,8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The work area is adequate to perform daily functions. ✓ The workplace induction process is clear and adequate. Team work is encouraged at all stages. ✓ Leaders avoid rumors to arise. ✓ It is difficult for the group to work with people with weak work habits. ✓ Not everyone agrees that their work contributes to the institutional objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A performance evaluation system is suggested. A critical factor to evaluate is the impact generated by the achievements of workers on meeting the objectives of <i>Molyntix</i>. ✓ It is suggested to work on skills, such as resilience, at the workplace to minimize unwanted behaviors among the employees while a new process is implemented.

Emotions

Emotions at *Molyntix* are properly shown among the employees.

Table 5: Emotions

AVERAGE	FINDINGS	PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT
4,0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Employees are constantly encouraged to improve their cognitive capacity and skills. ✓ Employees consider that <i>Molyntix</i> has played an important role in their lives and they feel proud to belong to it. ✓ Employees show a proper management of their emotions. ✓ Open communication channels are present. ✓ It is not easy for them to discuss their fears, or clearly demonstrate their joys and feelings. ✓ The employees are comfortable receiving compliments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote the participation of employees in the planning of organizational changes. ✓ Create interactive spaces between work teams, to encourage a more effective communication.

Decision-Making

The results show that employees in *Molyntix* are skillful in decision making. They are

good at analyzing the situation, staying bias alert, combining rational analysis with intuition and maintaining high levels of creativity.

Table 6: Decision-making

AVERAGE	FINDINGS	PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENTS
4,3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Employees feel supported by their bosses. ✓ Problems are analyzed and solutions' alternatives are identified, verifying the possible risks and benefits. ✓ Creativity is a factor that helps generate solutions, and participants feel responsible for them. ✓ Time and organizational alignment are obstacles in their performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A performance evaluation system is suggested. A critical factor to evaluate is the impact generated by the achievements of workers on meeting the objectives of <i>Molyntix</i>. ✓ It is suggested to work on skills, such as resilience, at the workplace to minimize unwanted behaviors among the employees while the new process is implemented.

Conclusions

According to the results, the success of *Molyntix* business process is influenced by favorable characteristics of organizational behavior such as motivation, job

satisfaction, emotions and decision-making, in contrast to the characteristics of perceptions and attitudes, which require a prompt intervention from the company to reduce their negative impact on current and future projects. Then, some

recommendations for intervention are as follows:

- Designing a communication plan for all the organization levels for a better implementation of current and future projects.
- Creating safe spaces for communication to promote integration, personal and professional development, and employees' recognition, in order to generate favorable changes in the organizational behavior of workers involved in the process.
- Implementing positive reinforcement motivation strategies. This reinforcement must be supported by specific achievements, which must be previously arranged and communicated. This should also be aligned with the goals of the organization. Productivity results can be also considered.
- Designing and implementing strategies for controlling emotions, especially in those employees who have the responsibility to negotiate with external suppliers and internal clients. An important aspect for a successful performance of a process corresponds to the purchase price of the products imported and the management of the inventory.
- Considering that the information generated by the process is shared, it is necessary to reconcile the entire structure to favor and potentiate these advantages. Improving communication streams into the organizational levels. Establishing interdisciplinary teams to make strategic decisions that would facilitate measuring the performance with the suggested motivation strategy.

The authors of this paper believe that the described intervention recommendations will generate positive results into the organizational behavior for *Molyntix* that will effectively contribute to a higher level of productivity in the company.

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